Sales and Land Values. The aggregate value of the property which was sold was approximately 40 lakhs, £300,000. In the previous year prices reached a somewhat higher figure but they included several sales of large areas of land on the edge of Manama. There has been no fall in land prices and there are no indications of a change in the situation. High prices are still being paid for building sites in Manama on which European style houses, flats and bungalows, are being built, which are let at excessively high rents. When the demand for houses of this type begins to lessen then rents will decrease and there are some signs that this event is not far off, several recently built houses have "To Let" notices on their doors. At present as much as Rs. 1,000/- per month is being charged for a three-bedroom, dining-sitting-room bungalow on the Jufair Road.

A recent satisfactory development has been the demand by working class men to buy small building plots in Manama, Muharraq, Hidd and Rafaa. The building loan schemes of the Government and the Bahrain Petroleum Company have stimulated this development. At one time people were satisfied to live in hired houses or barastis for which they paid rent but now, partly owing to the rapaciousness of landlords and partly because it has become everyone's ambition to own the house in which he lives, there is an active demand for plots of ground on which small houses can be built. Unfortunately the Government owns very little land in and around Manama and nobody wishes to live even at a short distance from the bazaar, the schools and the cinemas.

The most important sales were an Arab style house in the southern district of Manama, on Shaikh Isa Road, which was sold for Rs. 200,000 and a plot of land in the Qudhabia district which was bought by the Government as a site for workmen's dwellings for Rs. 2,57,000, at Rs. 2/5 per square foot. The Government sold 87 plots of land, in various places, for Rs. 3.50,000. Land on the edge of the towns of Manama and Muharraq was sold at prices ranging from Rs. 1/4 to Rs. 3/- per square foot. Thirty building plots were sold at East Rafaa, on the plain below the town, to residents of Rafaa, at 2 Annas per square foot. Land on this site was marked out as a residential area with rows of plots of uniform depth along future roads. At the end of the year a few purchasers had begun to build stone houses on the ground which they bought.

Legislation. In Safar (October 1952) an important Ordinance was issued which prohibited all persons subject to Bahrain jurisdiction from disposing of any property except to Bahrain subjects. An extension of this order was issued later providing for the contingency of heirs in an estate of a Bahrain subject being themselves foreign subjects. The result of these Ordinances was that not only were Bahrain subjects restricted from selling their property to foreigners but all persons subject to Bahrain jurisdiction, Persians, subjects of Saudi Arabia and of other Gulf States, were restricted from selling their property to each other or to nationals of other countries. Only foreigners not under the jurisdiction of the Bahrain Courts were free to sell their property to other foreigners. The object of the Government is to prevent land in Bahrain from being alienated and it is hoped that in future this legislation will be further extended to preclude all foreigners in Bahrain from disposing of their property to any persons who are not Bahrain subjects.

The imposition of this ordinance caused some resentment among foreigners especially among Saudi Arabians and Persians who in the past have acquired extensive property in Bahrain. This ordinance was probably the cause of some reduction in the number of large land sales during 1372.

One of the reasons why the Government now has so little land at its disposal in Manama and on the outskirts of the town is because in the past large pieces of land were either sold or given to Persians and Saudi Arabians. In the former category is one of the principal landowners in the town. The only area of any size, suitable for development as a housing area, is the land on the south-west of Manama which is now occupied by the installations of Cable and Wireless Ltd. Arrangements are being made for the Company to move out into the country to a site on the Aali plain, but this move will take some time to be carried out.

Rents of Government Shops. The Department collected rents amounting to Rs. 51,000/- from the shops in Barrett Road and from the flat above the Post Office and Rs. 20,000/- from rents of 26 plots of land which were let on leases. Temporary leases of land produced Rs. 3,800.

JUDICIAL

(From the report of Mr. Salim Al Arayedh, Superintendent, Judicial Department)

The number of cases of all kinds which were filed in the Senior Court, consisting of Shaikh Daij bin Hamed and Shaikh Ali bin Ahmed, sitting separately except on one day of the week when both sit together with the Adviser, was 1158. This was 258 more than in the previous year. The cases consisted of 451 civil suits of which 15 related to administration of estates, 430 criminal charges, including a number of trivial matters which would not usually be dealt with by a senior court, and 227 land registration cases. The increase over the previous year was mainly due to the court having acquired jurisdiction over nationals of other Gulf States. Of these cases 167 were civil suits. 691

In all the courts civil suits predominate and a high proportion of them are concerned with immovable property. The high value of land, especially in the towns, has made the public more conscious of the importance of boundaries and the worth of property. There has been much litigation over inheritance and shares in houses and gardens. Heirs in estates who in the past were content to live together in one building now apply to the courts for an order to divide the property so that they may sell their shares in it. Because such high prices can be obtained for land anybody who can claim even a small share in a building or a garden takes his case to the courts. 691 423 428

It has been noticed in the Appeal Court too that questions of land ownership and boundaries have predominated.

There were no important civil cases and, apart from traffic offences, no serious crimes. A man stabbed his brother during a quarrel, inflicting "grievous hurt" for which he was sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment and in two fatal traffic accidents drivers of vehicles were sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment and to pay fines of Rs. 5,000/-. In certain traffic offences the occupants of cars ran away which suggests that they were probably under the influence of liquor when the accidents occurred. 681 697

Fines amounting to Rs. 7,623/- were paid into court and the sum collected in court fees was Rs. 43,599.

In the small courts 1,964 new cases were filed, 1,668 cases were disposed of and at the end of the year 692 cases were pending. The courts issued 506 execution orders leaving 155 to be dealt with at the end of the year. 691

The Sunni and Shia Courts heard 269 and 172 cases respectively leaving 119 and 51 cases pending. Out of 129 cases which were referred to the Majlis Tajara for an opinion 94 cases were returned to the courts and 35 cases were pending.

The Sunni Shera Court did not work smoothly during the year owing to differences of opinion among the three Kadis, two of them being of the Maliki and one of the Shafi Sect. At one time all cases were judged according to the Maliki tenets, this being the sect of the Ruling Family, but some years ago the Government issued a direction to the court according to which if the plaintiff, or both parties, followed the Shafi doctrine then their case should be tried according to Shafi law. 692 693

There has also been criticism of the Maglis Tajara which consists of a group of leading merchants appointed by the Government who give opinions on commercial matters and local custom. They are busy men and they receive no pay and when it is inconvenient for them to attend the court, and it is frequently inconvenient, they do not appear. Often less than half of the number are present. In addition, they are closely connected either as competitors or partners and it is sometimes difficult for them to give impartial opinion.

The Shia Appeal Kadi gave judgment in 18 cases, the Senior Appeal Court heard 27 cases and the Junior Appeal Court dealt with 28 cases.